

change the laws of their country governing abortion. This means that participation in a rally, the lobbying of government representatives, or any advocacy efforts by an organization to either allow or even maintain legal abortions in their own countries would be grounds for the United States to rescind funding. Such a restriction is a clear violation of the right to free speech and would be unconstitutional in the United States.

Let us intimately examine the very real and humanitarian effects of withholding funding for international family planning. Oftentimes, facilities which provide family planning information also provide the majority of health-related services to a given population. When the only health care facility in a rural community closes due to insufficient operating costs, who pays the price? The impoverished mother of seven seeking a tubal ligation to prevent future unplanned pregnancies pays the price. Young newlyweds desiring to learn about oral contraception and condom use, as well as natural family planning pays the price. A village in need of medical treatment for tuberculosis, malaria, iron-deficiency, or any other illness unrelated to reproductive issues pays the price.

If the United States is serious about its resolve to enhance the democracies, economies, health and education infrastructures, and human living conditions in the developing world, then it must acknowledge the interdependence of these sectors in a country's development. Why should we realistically expect to witness significant increases in economic growth within the trade, banking, or manufacturing industries when much of a country's population remains formally uneducated without access to basic medical services and information?

The difficult process of international development requires a comprehensive approach, congressional funds appropriated for this purpose have a proven track record of effectiveness, but are in need of continued support. NGO's and health care facilities provide invaluable services that a developing nation's government is often unable to provide for financial reasons. Understand unequivocally that no U.S. federal funds provide abortion services in this country or abroad. Let us never again allow this fact to be blurred within our discussions and debates with supporters of the global gag rule.

The removal of the Mexico City language from the Foreign Operations appropriations bill was a declaration by the United States that it is truly committed to the democratic principles upon which the nation was conceived. The bill reaffirms our proactive concern for impoverished and underserved people throughout the globe. It is my sincere hope that the new administration will demonstrate the compassion and moral leadership of the United States by retaining as a top priority the health and well being of women, children, and families worldwide.

IN HONOR OF F. WHITTEN PETERS, SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HANSEN. Madam Speaker, today I rise in tribute to the Honorable F. Whitten Peters, the outgoing Secretary of the Air Force, who recently left office to return to private life.

In his 4 years as Under Secretary, Acting Secretary and Secretary, Whit Peters led America's Air Force during a period of unprecedented change. Under his inspired leadership, the Air Force evolved from the garrison force that won the Cold War to the Expeditionary Aerospace Force that dominated the skies over Kosovo and Serbia, deterred conflict around the globe, and delivered comfort to the afflicted in over 100 nations during the last year alone.

With unflagging energy and unfailing good humor, Secretary Peters has attached and overcome a broad array of resource problems affecting the Air Force. Colleagues on both sides of the aisle will well remember his work with us to secure additional resources for aircraft spare parts. He labored tirelessly to ensure that aircraft maintainers had the tools and equipment required to perform their important duties. And he made revolutionary use of Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve members to augment members of the Regular Air Force in keeping our aircraft flying. As a result of these and many other significant initiatives, the Air Force arrested a decade-long decline in aircraft readiness.

With similar vigor and success, Secretary Peters has led the development of the Air Force as the service leader in the national security space arena. Today, the United States Air Force provides over 85 percent of the national security space funding and 90 percent of the people who perform the national security space mission.

More important, under Secretary Peters' deft guidance, the Air Force made national security space assets more responsive and more relevant to our national defense than ever before. He built pioneering partnerships between NASA, the National Reconnaissance Office, and the Air Force to rapidly exploit emerging technologies that will move vital intelligence information to field commanders in minutes rather than months.

But, even with the most daunting challenges of global crises, emerging technologies and constrained resources, the 700,000 men and women of America's Air Force have always been his most important concern. His unceasing efforts on their behalf in the halls of this building resulted in a better quality of life and better compensation for every Air Force member. As a result, the Air Force exceeded its recruiting goals in 2000 and is ahead of schedule for 2001.

When Whit Peters came to the Office of the Secretary, he had inherited declining retention rates among the troops at all levels. But his efforts have

paid off. For the first 3 months of this fiscal year, first-term airmen are re-enlisting at rates above the Air Force's goal, a goal that is already higher than the goal of any other service. And the Air Force's pilot shortage has been cut by a third in just over a year.

My colleagues, today the Air Force is better, much better, America is stronger, and the world is safer because of the dedication, sacrifice and hard work of Secretary Whit Peters. I know my colleagues will join me in wishing him good luck and Godspeed as he returns to private life.

HISTORIC DAY FOR AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SOUDER. Madam Speaker, today was an historic day for the United States because our President, George W. Bush, announced a new office for faith-based initiatives.

Many of us have worked for many years, as has President Bush and the State of Texas, in many of these initiatives and are very excited about what the President has done. There have been many people toiling away in our inner cities, in our rural areas, and other places trying to extend a helping hand to the poor, yet often ignored in the public arena, while many groups who have been less effective have been able to get the funds.

Nobody is arguing that there are not well-meaning people in multiple bureaucracies of the Federal Government and of State and local governments. But we also know that many of the most life-changing experiences, many of the most effective programs, have actually occurred at the neighborhood level, the grassroots level, from people who live in those communities, who work in those communities, who are deeply invested; they leverage the funds, and yet they are not eligible when we have different programs.

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We have had a number of amendments through this House, some of which have died in the Senate, some of which were vetoed, and some of which are law in the charitable choice provisions.

President Bush has gone one step farther. Not only has he said that he favors these charitable choice provisions in allowing, under rigid conditions, nobody can proselytize, nobody can try to push their religious faiths on somebody else, but for Christians who want to do service for others, to try to extend those dollars, whether it be in housing, in juvenile justice, whether it be in certain after-school programs, whether it be helping the homeless, whether it be helping people with AIDS, that Christian and Muslim and Hindu and Buddhist and Jewish organizations can now apply for those grants.